



Press Release

From: Teton County / Jackson Hole Community Pathways

Date: March 22, 2011

Re: North 89 Pathway Project Seasonal Closure

Contact: Brian Schilling, Town of Jackson/Teton County Pathways Coordinator

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The seasonal closure of the North 89 Pathway between the Town of Jackson and Grand Teton National Park will be in effect through April 30. The pathway, which is still under construction, is subject to an annual closure between October 1 and April 30 in order to reduce impacts to migrating and wintering elk and other wildlife on the National Elk Refuge.

The closure is a condition of the agreement between Teton County and the National Elk Refuge which grants permission to Teton County to construct and operate the pathway on US Fish and Wildlife Service property. While the closure itself is authorized by Federal Law, Teton County will assist with enforcement and reporting. Violators are subject to fines and possible Federal prosecution.

Brian Schilling, Pathways Coordinator for Teton County said "The closure is really in place to limit the impacts of human presence on the pathway to wintering wildlife on the Elk Refuge. The spring closure is critical to reducing stress to animals during a time when they're recovering from a long winter."

National Elk Refuge Manager Steve Kallin stated, "The Pathway will provide an exciting opportunity for the public to enjoy the beauty of the National Elk Refuge and observe much of the wildlife that makes Jackson Hole so special. The seasonal closure ensures wildlife, especially elk and nesting waterfowl, are not disturbed during a very sensitive time of the year."

Teton County staff has worked with the National Elk Refuge to develop a management plan that informs the public about the closure. Signs and barriers have been installed at access points along the pathway, and specific outreach will be done with key user groups.

Teton County has completed the majority of the construction work on Phase I, which includes the 4.3-mile segment between the Town of Jackson at Flat Creek and the Grand Teton National Park turnout above the Fish Hatchery. Phases II and III include the underpass to the National Museum of Wildlife Art, the pathway extension to the southern boundary of Grand Teton National Park, and the separate pathway bridge across the Gros Ventre River. Work on the bridge started in early March, and the County will complete their construction by the end of September. Grand Teton National Park, which will construct the pathway segment between the Gros Ventre River and Moose Junction, plans to begin construction later this summer and complete their project by the end of the year.

Schilling added, “The North 89 Pathway is going to be one of the jewels of the Teton County pathway system, and the opportunity to ride from the Town of Jackson all the way to Jenny Lake on a separated pathway is something that people will come to Jackson specifically to experience. We need to make sure that the community is very aware that violating the seasonal closure could actually jeopardize our right to have the pathway at all.”

Questions may be directed to Brian Schilling, Pathways Coordinator for the Town of Jackson, at (307) 732-8573 or bschilling@ci.jackson.wy.us.